

Remarks/Arguments

In the March 8, 2006 Office Action, claims 8, 9, 12 and 13 were rejected under section 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Office Action indicated that claims 8 and 12 were confusing because the control valves do not open and close, but have two positions in which at least two ports are connected together. Claims 12 and 13 were rejected under section 102(b) as being anticipated by Applicant's admitted prior art. Claims 8 and 9 were rejected under section 103 as being unpatentable over Applicant's admitted prior art in view of Truax (US 4,206,580).

Response to the section 112 rejections of claims 8, 9, 12 and 13. Claim 8 is amended to specify the first pilot-operated directional control valve directs flow of hydraulic fluid from the first hydraulic motor to the second and/or third motors, or directs the flow to bypass the motors, instead of opening or closing. Claim 12 is amended to specify each pilot operated control valve directs or prevents flow of hydraulic fluid from the first motor to the second and/or third motors, instead of opening or closing. Claim 12 also is amended to specify first, second and third hydraulic motors, and a pair of pilot operated control valves. Claim 13 is amended to specify the first hydraulic motor is not associated with a solenoid-operated control valve.

Response to the section 102(b) rejection of claims 12 and 13. Claim 12 is amended to specify that each pilot operated control valve directs hydraulic flow from the first motor to the second and/or third motors without directing the hydraulic flow through any other restrictive valves. Applicant's admitted prior art lacks pilot operated control valves that direct hydraulic flow from a first motor to second and/or third motors without directing the hydraulic flow through any other restrictive valves. Instead, Applicant's admitted prior art includes logic control valve 74 that directs hydraulic flow from first motor 64 to second motor 66 through check valve 86 and pilot check valve 84, both of which are restrictive to the hydraulic flow. This is described in paragraphs 24-28 of the specification and Fig. 4 of the drawings.

Claim 13 is patentable over Applicant's admitted prior art for at least the same reasons as claim 12 on which it depends.

Response to the section 103 rejection of claims 8 and 9. Claim 8 is amended to specify the first or second pilot-operated directional control valves direct flow of hydraulic fluid from the first hydraulic motor to the second or third hydraulic motors respectively without directing the flow through any other restrictive valves. Claim 9 is amended to specify the first and second pilot-operated directional control valves direct flow of hydraulic fluid from the first hydraulic motor to both the second and third hydraulic motors in series without directing the flow through any other restrictive valves.

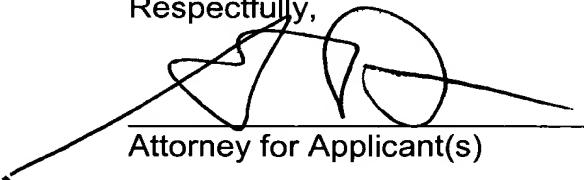
Claims 8 and 9 are patentable in view of Applicant's admitted prior art and Truax. Applicant's admitted prior art lacks pilot-operated directional control valves that direct hydraulic flow from a first motor to second and/or third motors without directing hydraulic flow through other restrictive valves. Instead, Applicant's admitted prior art shows logic control valve 74 that directs hydraulic flow from first motor 64 to second motor 66 through check valve 86 and pilot check valve 84, both of which restrict hydraulic flow. See paragraphs 24-28 of the specification and Fig. 4 of the drawings.

Truax relates to a mower device with one fluid power motor 16. Truax fails to show pilot-operated directional control valves that direct hydraulic flow between more than one motor.

In conclusion, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully,


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